

OPENING STATEMENT FOR GLENN A. WOODS

Before the Judiciary Committee

February 23, 2009

Good afternoon.

My name is Glenn Woods and I am honored to appear before this committee today. I would like to thank Governor Rell for nominating me and the committee for considering my nomination to the Superior Court bench. I would also like to thank Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor and the legislative leaders today – Donald Williams, John McKinney, Chris Donovan and Lawrence Cafero.

I would like to congratulate all of the other nominees on this momentous achievement.

I am accompanied by my wife, Cee Cee Woods and some of my colleagues and friends.

By way of introduction, I was born in Philadelphia, Pa, the eldest of five children to William and Eloise Woods. My father retired four years ago at age 77 after 50 years in the practice of physical therapy in Meriden. He was one of the first physical therapists to open a private practice in this country. My mother, a homemaker, who passed away unexpectedly four years ago, devoted her life to raising her five children and was active in many civic and cultural affairs in our town. My parents, who were active in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, instilled a sense of altruism in all of us and urged us to always work hard and to help others in our pursuits.

I was educated in the public schools of Meriden. I began my college education at Morgan State University, a historically black university in Baltimore, Maryland. I received my undergraduate degree in 1975 from Trinity College here in Hartford.

In 1979, I graduated from the Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. Antioch was the nation's foremost public interest law school. Antioch prepared its students to meet the legal needs of all citizens in our society, including the underprivileged and those excluded from our mainstream.

I live in Middletown with my wife of 25 years, Cecilia, who retired as a legislative staffer two years ago. We have one son, William, who is 13 years old and in the eighth grade. He is our pride and joy and the light of our lives.

Since my graduation from law school, I have been employed in both the public and private sectors. As an assistant attorney general for the past seventeen years, I have had the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my career. I would also like to thank Attorney General Richard Blumenthal for his support during my career at the Attorney General's Office.

During my tenure as an assistant attorney general, serving as counsel to the Wage and Workforce Standards Division of the Connecticut Department of Labor, I have litigated a large volume of cases seeking wages for employees when an employer fails to pay proper wages in accordance with our state laws. I have litigated and argued significant cases on the issue of wage enforcement for the plaintiff, Department of Labor, before the state trial and appellate courts, the state Supreme Court and also in federal court. With the advice and support of my great colleagues at the Attorney General's office and the Department of Labor, we were able to establish important case law and achieve successful settlements which guaranteed that workers in Connecticut would be fully paid for all the hours they worked.

Further, as counsel, I have been influential in determining the course of litigation in the most substantive Labor Department wage enforcement cases. I also worked to establish agency policy and legal precedent for the Labor Department.

In the last few years, my responsibilities have become more supervisory in nature. Approximately five years ago, I began directing other attorneys in the prosecution of wage enforcement cases. In November of last year, I was named head of the Workers Compensation and Labor Law Department. This department includes sixteen attorneys and seven support staff. This new challenge required me to continue to lead and direct in labor law and also required me to begin to learn and understand workers compensation law.

I have truly enjoyed my work. If I am appointed to the bench, I will certainly miss the fine people of that department as well as the excitement and challenges of supervising such a large and capable legal department.

I am pleased that three of our nominees today are from the office of the Attorney General. I know that Attorney General Blumenthal must be proud knowing that he has provided three candidates for your consideration.

I have had considerable courtroom experience. In the course of my career, I have argued motions and conducted trials in state Superior Court. I have briefed and argued a number of appeals in the Connecticut Appellate Court and the Connecticut Supreme Court and I have argued in Federal District Court. I have advised and counseled Labor Department officials. Further, I have prepared opinions and legal memoranda for state government officials, including Attorney General Blumenthal.

I have negotiated resolutions to complex labor cases and managed and directed attorneys. In addition, I am a member of a Committee at the Office of the Attorney General assigned the task of interviewing candidates for the position of Assistant Attorney General. I believe that I have the skills and experience that are sound preparation for the Judicial bench.

I have been active in my community tutoring underprivileged and homebound children in the Homebound Tutorial Program. In addition, I was an Advisory Board Member for a federal grant program associated with the Village for Children and Families here in Hartford. This program was charged with seeking to achieve adoptive placements for children in foster care. Currently, I serve on the Board of the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks.

In my position as Assistant Attorney General, I have dedicated myself to vigorously enforcing state laws and ensuring that those who break the law are prosecuted. This is done to assist and protect those who are vulnerable and may be aggrieved, often without redress. I have a concern for justice and a respect for the rule of law and its significance in ensuring the rights and liberties of all of our citizens. I have done my best to work in this regard throughout my career.

While at the Attorney General's office, I have enjoyed litigating and obtaining the hard-earned wages for citizens who are frequently and routinely in great need of their income. Further, my life experiences as an African-American have made me extremely aware of and sensitive to the needs and concerns of all persons, regardless of their background or station in life. As a result, if I am confirmed, I am confident that I would be fair, just, respectful, and empathetic to all persons who would appear before me in court.

Finally, I believe that serving on the Judicial Bench would be the most significant manner in which I could continue my public service.

If confirmed, I would serve with restraint, intelligence, complete dedication and commitment. It is an honor to be nominated by the Governor and considered by this committee. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you have.